



**CHC READY TO MOVE FORWARD ON
IMMIGRATION REFORM WITH PRESIDENT OBAMA**
Wednesday, March 18, 2009

WASHINGTON DC– The Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) met with President Barack Obama at the White House today. The sole topic of discussion at the meeting was the urgent and vital need to reform our nation's broken immigration system. The CHC shared their plan and agenda for moving comprehensive immigration reform forward and the Members were pleased to have the support of President Barack Obama in moving forward with our plan this year.

"The President made clear to us that he is a man of his word. He clearly understands the consequences of a broken immigration system. We believe that under his leadership we can finally provide some dignity to the thousands of families that are living in the shadows and in fear," said Congresswoman Nydia M. Velázquez, Chair of the CHC.

"Bringing our nation's 12 million undocumented immigrants out of the shadows and putting their hard work on the books will increase the tax base across the board. And with nearly 17 percent of all new small businesses owned by immigrants, this hard-working population can help lead our economy out of this recession. President Obama has committed to working with us as we continue to lead on this issue, and serve as advocates for the immigrant community."

During the meeting, President Obama reaffirmed his understanding of the difficulties immigrants are facing. He also conveyed that he is aware of the impact the immigration raids are having on families, and assured the CHC that he is pursuing ways, including administrative first steps, to ensure the enforcement policies do not result in the separation of families. All 24 Members of the CHC were present for the meeting.

"We came to the President today as allies and supporters, and in return he showed us that he remains committed to immigration reform that stabilizes our economy, secures our borders and keeps our families together," said Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez, Chair of the CHC Immigration Task Force. "The President showed the CHC that, although it is very early in his administration, he understands that for

the immigrant community it's the 11th hour, and there is no time to waste. The Latino community supported President Obama overwhelmingly in the election, and they remain energized not only by his victory but also by his message of support for comprehensive immigration reform. I believe that a plan is forthcoming, and that we will see real change this year."

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus (CHC) is comprised of Members of Congress of Hispanic descent. Since 1976 the CHC has been addressing the needs of the Hispanic community in all areas of American life. For more information on the CHC, call (202) 225-2410.

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